

3645 0000-Lewis Central Comm School District
Iowa Core-Assurances

Iowa Core

Vision, Mission, Goals

1. What actions are established or will be established to ensure the Leadership Team engages educators in collaborative processes to realize the vision of the Iowa Core through effective implementation?

We have leadership teams at all levels that focus on the three tenets of Iowa Core: Content, Instruction, Assessment and the alignment of these tenets. This includes our District Leadership Team, district Content Teams, building level leadership and content driven teams, and PLC teams within the buildings that include all teachers and administrators. We plan and carry out collaborative professional learning at the building level PD twice each month, as well as 4-5 full day district level PD days. Since January of 2010, when we introduced our staff to the Characteristics of Effective Instruction to the present year, our plans for implementation have been driven by Iowa Core. Beginning with 2014-2015 school year our district embarks on a learning journey around Quality Balanced Assessment Systems. This journey will be a two to three year process beginning with providing a common foundation across the district and then to specific buildings, grade levels, and content areas focusing on assessment within their classrooms.

We also have mechanisms in place through online sources to monitor the alignment of intended, enacted and assessed curriculum connected to state standards. We continue to refine this process to show an accurate picture of our alignment.

2. What data are you currently using to address the measurable goals and improvements in Social Studies? How are you using this data to ensure that students are reaching the goals in Social Studies?

Our district level Social Studies Content Team meets regularly and has developed goals that include:

- identifying and/or developing common summative grade or course level assessments aligned with Iowa Core standards;
- use of common desired states of understandings;
- upgrade of resource material aligned with Core that will promote inquiry and conceptual learning;

- use of building level content PLCs to create common plans and assessments that all teachers deliver.

Classroom teachers, as part of a PLC team, analyze their students' work/assessments for alignment, gaps, overlap and to strengthen common understanding. The district content team also looks at vertical alignment of content, in addition to many of the same student assessments as the PLCs.

3. What data are you currently using to address the measurable goals and improvements in 21st Century Skills? How are you using this data to ensure that students are reaching the goals in 21st Century Skills?

Our district level Technical Ed Content Team has the responsibility for monitoring how these standards are addressed by teachers in our district. The team meets regularly and has developed goals that include:

- assist building and district lead planning teams to bring awareness of these standards to teachers
identifying 21st century skill standards within each grade level;
- finding where gaps exist and addressing them;
- use of common desired states of understandings.

Classroom teachers, in PLCs, plan units of instruction identifying the 21st Century Skills that are part of the unit. These standards are attached in our online planning tool. Assessments point to the standards being assessed. Our technology curriculum is in the process of updating as access to technology is being transformed in the district.

Collaborative Relationships

4. What actions are established to ensure Learning Supports are coordinated to support the Iowa Core?

The district is involved in the state MTSS learning opportunities PK-5; our SIAC has proposed these recommended goal areas that are being shared with district and building level teams:

- Continue to focus efforts of school improvement on accelerating growth for all students and on closing the gap for students with IEPs.
- Expand and improve the integration of technology throughout the system.
- Intervene in timely and effective ways to help meet the needs of all students.
- Support innovative teaching practices and instructional methods to more precisely engage and address the learning needs of all students.
- Promote the well-being of students.

We partner with a local agency for contracted services involving emotional and mental health; we have partnered with AEA resources to increase services for School-based

intervention. During the 2014-2015 school year we will be emphasizing supports for mental health within our district as well, partnering with additional community entities.

5. What actions are established to ensure community participation (including local school board) in the implementation of the Iowa Core?

SIAC meets multiple times each year with the task of reviewing data and making recommendations to the school board. Part of that includes Iowa Core implementation. There is a monthly meeting with a group of Community Members where important items within the system occur such as Iowa Core. We also meet with PTA and other parent groups at building levels during the year. For example during conference evenings in small groups. These meetings happen 3 or more times during a year in the district.

Iowa Core is infused with all we do in the district. We do not call special attention to it as a 'thing' we do, it is simply embedded. Anytime we research and recommend resources through our district content teams it is through the lens of Iowa Core. When we update curriculum units and guides it is through the lens of Iowa Core. Our school board participates in the approval and/or adoption of curriculum matters like these and are therefore kept apprised of our efforts of implementation.

Curriculum and Instruction

6. What actions are established to ensure educators use data to make decisions regarding the alignment of the enacted to the intended and to the assessed curriculum of the Iowa Core?

With the collaborative work of building teams there is interdependence and accountability within the team; our content teams, building administrators and district leadership team monitor implementation of units which includes the alignment of IC.

An online tool is used to create units of instruction, attach standards, and then classroom teachers document the execution of those units. This currently is in process and is taking a waterfall approach so that it is done with fidelity. Our goal is to complete the conversion over 2-3 years of updating, executing, and monitoring the implementation before 100% of our units are housed online in this tool.

7. What actions are established to ensure collaborative teams are engaged in learning about instructional practices that support improved student achievement?

Our district leadership team has provided professional learning of best practice instructional strategies during full day PD days dispersed throughout the year as well as twice each month during building level professional learning time. Then as expectations were put into place over the past 3 years teachers have incorporated these processes and tools into daily planning and instruction.

Teachers are involved in professional learning through PLCs and large group events. We do have some instructional coaching support at buildings that strengthen the connection between acquiring new learning and transferring that into the classroom with teacher. Our district is submitting a Teacher Leadership and Compensation Plan grant application in October 2014 with the intent of further developing this layer of support in the classroom.

8. What actions are established to ensure collaborative teams are engaged in the implementation of instructional practices that support improved student achievement?

All building PD Plans & the District PD Plan include Iowa Core components in a purposeful way. Buildings use PLC structures for teachers to collaborate around understanding Iowa Core standards, what instructional strategies to use, and how to assess with rigor and relevance. These plans are carried out through the year with fidelity by leadership teams at all levels. Instruction is supported K-5 by two instructional coaches at each building and at the secondary level coaches are used when possible. Administrators monitor implementation of instructional strategies being studied in their buildings using walk-through data.

Iowa Core is embedded in how our district operates from planning, to instruction, to assessments.

Professional Development

9. Describe how the district uses data analysis (goals, student achievement data, and other data) to guide professional development, including professional development supporting the implementation of the Iowa Core. Include specific activities, resources, and timelines.

Professional Development Learning Opportunities. Implementation involves:

- Building data guide specific learning opportunities for staff within each building that is connected with our district focus on approximately 20 early release day meetings per year for learning opportunities (theory presentations, collaborative practice, feedback, practice loops)
- Common training sessions on four in-service days during the school year (dialogue about curriculum alignment and implementation of the Iowa Core)
- Meetings of the building leadership teams (planning building professional development; collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; practicing demonstrations)
- Teachers working in PLC teams regularly
- Grade level, team level and department meetings (observing demonstrations, working with data, developing lessons, reviewing theory, etc.)
- Teacher Career Development Plans align to building and district goals of student achievement with built in reflection intervals for feedback and adjustments.

10. Describe how professional development, including professional development supportive of the implementation of the Iowa Core, contains all the elements of effective professional development for student achievement (theory, demonstration, practice, observation, reflection, collaboration, mentoring, and peer coaching). Include specific activities, resources, and timelines.

The professional learning that occurs on our five full day district days and our 20 early release days is grounded in best practice and researched theory as evidenced by the professional literature. Multiple experts show data that relates conceptual understanding and conceptual instruction and design to higher student achievement. Experts such as Grant Wiggins, Dylan Williams, Lynn Erickson to name a few provide research that support the type of work we are doing. The design of our PD time uses teacher modeling as they present material as part of our District Leadership Team. All our participants are involved in professional reading and discussion, guided practice around the strategies being presented, artifacts displayed with feedback loops built into the PD time frames. DVD excerpts are used appropriately to hear from the experts, see demonstrations and allow for processing of this material. We have also strategically called on outside experts locally, within our Green Hills AEA, to those outside our state such as Dr. Lynn Erickson (past years) and using ASCD experts in train-the-trainers model situations (past years) that have ripple effects (this year) within our lead learners who directly impact teachers in classroom who directly impact students. Beginning in 2014 our district focuses on the final prong of Iowa Core, Assessment. We will follow a similar pattern for learning as our work with conceptual understanding and conceptual instruction and design. This will fulfill a long range learning plan around the three tenets of Iowa Core: Content, Instruction, Assessment. We have based our initial work around quality classroom assessment systems through the research of experts such as Rick Stiggins and Jan Chappuis.

Professional Learning Community Collaboration Teams are used at the building level to create avenues for collaboration, observations, feedback, assessment of implementation, etc. on a regular basis during the early release days and also at regular intervals outside these times. Besides the Collaborative Learning Teams within buildings, teachers also have peer coaches as part of the Career Development Plan process; we use Journey to Excellence mentoring for our beginning educators and also provide support for new and experienced teachers in our district through peer mentors who all engage in regular collaboration with monthly reports, summer learning sessions prior to the start of school, and periodic face-to-face meetings to ensure as smooth as transition as possible into our district.

Our administrators are immersed in our PD plans from inception to delivery to assessment afterwards as lead learners, modeling for teachers those characteristics of effective educators. Our district also provides for professional learning for this group of educators monthly through resources such as School Administrators of Iowa, book studies, and discussion groups.